



News Release

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Super Bowl party rules — add a few healthy food options to the menu

Handle food safely — don't let your Super Bowl afternoon turn into a toilet bowl night

OLYMPIA — Food is almost as important to your guests as the game when you host a Super Bowl party. While most people aren't watching their waistlines on Super Sunday, healthy food options and safe food handling will help keep the calories down and bellies happy.

Nearly half the people in the nation watch the big game, and food is a big part of the fun. In fact, more people gather to eat on Super Bowl Sunday than any other day of the year, except Thanksgiving. While the TV commentators talk about the keys to victory for the Colts and Saints, the key to avoiding foodborne illness is in the hands of the Super Bowl party host.

“Keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold is the rule of thumb any time food will be out on tables for very long,” said State Health Officer Dr. Maxine Hayes. “We get it — you’re not thinking about your health during the biggest game of the year. Still, following that guideline will keep your guests and their stomachs happy. And have some fun while getting your heart rate up with a game of touch football in the back yard before the game or a brisk walk around the block.”

Hayes says food handling is equally important. Always wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Remind your guests to wash their hands before eating. Keep raw meat (and meat juices) from touching other foods, utensils, and prep areas.

Foods that need to be refrigerated shouldn't sit out for more than two hours. Keep dips, salsas, and cocktail sauces on ice. And use a food thermometer to make sure foods you're serving are [cooked to the right temperature](#) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/food/safetytips.html>). Chicken wings, steaks, hamburgers, and sausages should be cooked to a high-enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria like [Salmonella and E. coli](#) (www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/food/factsheets.html).

To keep hot foods hot, choose dishes and appetizers that can be cooked in and served from a crock pot — like chili, Italian meatballs, Swedish meatballs, soups, or stews. Hot foods should be kept above 140°F and cold foods below 45°F. If food can't be kept at these temperatures, reheat it, refrigerate it, or throw it out after two hours.

“Handling, preparing, and serving food safely in these ways can help kill bacteria that can make us sick,” Hayes added, “and prevent an all-out blitz to get to the bathroom during the post-game.”

People often eat thousands of calories and hundreds of fat grams without thinking twice about it because they're so focused on the game. Offering a few [healthy snack options for guests](http://www.cdc.gov/men/superbowl/index.htm) (www.cdc.gov/men/superbowl/index.htm) could help them keep from overdoing it while watching the long-awaited commercials and post-game interviews.

Get your guests off the couch to burn some calories during the tailgate party or half-time show. Throw the football around or take a brisk walk around the block; bring your dog too. Nothing beats the benefits of exercise for good heart health and if you do it before or during the game, you'll burn some of the extra calories you and your guests consumed during the game.

Make salsa or serve hummus instead of cream-based dips. Try blending kidney or black beans, tomato, vinegar, and chili powder to spread on baked chips or pita chips. Instead of the usual fattening hero sandwiches, order or make a deli platter with ham, chicken, turkey, roast beef, and low-fat cheeses. Serve mustard instead of mayo and top with lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and pickles. Wrap them with low-calorie tortillas, or whole wheat bread or crackers.

Make your own pizza and save a bunch on saturated fat. Buy pizza dough and top it with grilled chicken, garlic, and some low-fat cheeses. Add fresh fruit and veggies like onions, pineapple, peppers, mushrooms, olives, and tomatoes.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at http://www.doh.wa.gov for a healthy dose of information.
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